

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2005**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

John R. Byers, Mount Vernon District
Frank A. de la Fe, Hunter Mill District
James R. Hart, Commissioner At-Large
Nancy Hopkins, Dranesville District
Ronald W. Koch, Sully District
Kenneth A. Lawrence, Providence District
Laurie Frost-Wilson, Commissioner At-Large

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Barbara J. Lippa, Executive Director, Planning Commission Office
Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk, Planning Commission Office
Leonard Wolfenstein, Acting Chief, Planning Division, Department of Transportation (FCDOT)
Richard Stevens, Project Manager, Dulles Rail Project, FCDOT
Michael Lake, Senior Transportation Planner, FCDOT
Sterling Wheeler, Branch Chief, Planning Division (PD), Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ)

OTHERS PRESENT:

Walter L. Alcorn, Commissioner At-Large
Janyce Hedetniemi, Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC), Braddock District
Camille Klein, TAC, Hunter Mill District

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Planning Commission Vice-Chairman John R. Byers constituted the meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Conference Room at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia, pursuant to Section 4-102 of the Commission's *Bylaws & Procedures*, and indicated that the first order of business was to elect a committee chairman.

Commissioner Lawrence MOVED TO NOMINATE FRANK DE LA FE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE 2005 TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hart and carried unanimously. Vice Chairman Byers then turned the chair over to Commissioner de la Fe to continue the meeting.

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Chairman de la Fe MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 12, 2005 AS AMENDED WITH EDITOR'S NOTE AT THE BOTTOM OF PAGE FIVE.

Commissioner Hart seconded the motion with the following additional amendment: ON PAGE 5, SECOND PARAGRAPH CHANGE "JODIE" TO "JODY." The motion carried unanimously.

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Chairman de la Fe noted that tonight's agenda included the following items: (1) Current status of the Dulles Metrorail Extension; (2) Transportation Plan Update Public Meetings; and (3) Scope of Services for Tysons Corner Urban Center Transportation and Urban Design Study.

Richard Stevens, Project Manager, Dulles Rail Project, Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT), distributed a handout entitled "Dulles Metrorail Extension – Current Status – Fairfax County Planning Commission Transportation Subcommittee" dated February 23, 2005, a copy of which is in the date file.

Reviewing the handout, Mr. Stevens said that rail service would be extended approximately 23 miles along the Dulles Airport Access Road, through Tysons Corner to Reston/Herndon, Dulles International Airport, and Loudoun County. He said this extension would be accomplished in two phases, the first of which would be an 11.6 mile extension through Tysons Corner to Reston with four stations in Tysons Corner and one at Wiehle Avenue with service expected to begin in 2011. He said the second phase would consist of three stations in Fairfax, one at Dulles International Airport, and two stations in Loudoun County with service beginning in 2015, depending upon federal funding.

Mr. Stevens said an environmental review had been approved by the Federal Transit Administration and the project was now in the preliminary engineering stage which included the final refinement of the alignment, station locations, and station plans. He reviewed the alignment of the Tysons Corner rail segment as shown on pages 6 and 7 of his handout, and described the features of the stations as shown on pages 8, 9, and 10. He said pages 12 and 13 were photo simulations of what the elevated section would look like along Route 7 and of the Wiehle Avenue Station.

Responding to a question from Commissioner Byers, Mr. Stevens said most of the land necessary for the expansion was located in public right-of-way, had been proffered by developers, or was underground. He said the only land needed to be acquired was for the area where escalators and elevators would be above ground.

Mr. Stevens stated that preliminary engineering began in October 2004 and would be completed by June 2006; the full funding grant agreement should be approved by December 2006; design and construction of Phase I should begin in late 2006 or early 2007; and revenue service should

begin in mid-2011. He noted that a toll increase, which had been approved by the Commonwealth Transportation on February 17, 2005 for the Dulles Toll Road, would be implemented on May 22, 2005 and would provide the State's share of the costs, and that a second increase could occur prior to construction of Phase II depending upon construction costs. He said the County's share would come from the tax district established for that purpose.

Mr. Stevens pointed out that one of the elements of the plan was a joint development solicitation for the Wiehle Avenue station to obtain a partner to design and construct a mixed-use transit oriented development. He said a Wiehle Avenue Steering Committee had been working with the County for a year on this and the two remaining issues were the Reston Center for Industry and Government Covenant, which prohibited housing and hotels in the area adjacent to the station, and tax district payments.

Commissioner de la Fe commented that it would take the agreement of 90 percent of the land ownership to rescind the covenants and at this point about 65 percent of the owners were in favor. Mr. Stevens said the joint development solicitation would be issued during the first week of March 2005 with bids due around the middle of June and that it was hoped that the covenants would be changed by then. If not, he said an alternative plan would have to be explored.

Addressing the Route 7 median alignment, Mr. Stevens explained that when extensive soil borings of the originally proposed location found a high ground water table and unstable soil conditions, the first thought had been to move it further onto private property. But he said that an assessment of a Route 7 alignment had determined that a median alignment would be less costly, would improve the development potential on both sides of Route 7, and would have no adverse affect on Metrorail operations.

Mr. Stevens explained that the Board of Supervisors had asked staff to draft a proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment to allow for special exception approval of the extension because Metrorail was a special use within the Zoning Ordinance and since it was being built by the State, it was exempt from the County's zoning laws. He said approval of an amendment would give the County control of the areas around the station. He noted that it was anticipated that the proposed amendment would be authorized by the Board of Supervisors in April and scheduled for a public hearing before the Planning Commission thereafter.

In response to a question from Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Stevens said that the Reston covenant and the lack of a joint development partner would not delay construction of the station itself, but would affect residential development. Chairman de la Fe pointed out that the goal was to create transit oriented development with residential uses around the site, but the public plan called for a garage only. Sterling Wheeler, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning, said the reason there was an urgency to develop a joint partner was because the parking garage for the transit facility would have to be constructed within a certain time frame which would hinder joint development.

Responding to another question from Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Stevens said that the last bullet on page 18 which stated "Development hinges on federal approval of the project" referred to the whole rail project, not only the joint development of a mixed use transit oriented development.

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Proceeding to the next topic on the agenda, the Transportation Plan Update Public Meetings, Leonard Wolfenstein, Acting Chief, Planning Division, FCDOT, reviewed the presentation that would be given to the public as outlined in his handout, a copy of which is in the date file.

Mr. Wolfenstein explained that seven public information meetings would be held between March 1 and March 14 throughout the County. He explained that among the topics to be covered were: the importance of public input; what the Transportation Plan was, why it was important, and where to find it; the original adoption of the Plan and subsequent amendments; examples of transportation improvements over the past 15 years; the purpose of the Plan update; the past, present, and future of transportation demand in the County; and challenges to the system.

Responding to questions from Commissioner Wilson, Mr. Wolfenstein said the draft text of the update would probably be available in the summer of 2005; the notice of the seven meetings had been made to the "LISTSERV" distribution list; and that workshops may be held after the initial round of public hearings had been held.

Commissioner Byers asked how a community could best raise concerns about minor road improvements. Mr. Wheeler said citizens should attend the public meetings and recommend changes and it would be determined if their suggestions were more appropriate for consideration during the APR cycle.

Chairman de la Fe said in previous discussions about this, it had been decided that public input was different from nominations, but that all comments would be addressed. Mr. Wolfenstein said that public input was now called a "plan change suggestion" and that a form to make such a suggestion could be found on the FCDOT website and that all submissions would be carefully considered and a response made to them.

Commissioner Byers noted that road changes often depended upon recommended density which could be changed during the APR process. Mr. Wolfenstein responded that local circulation patterns should be part of the APR process. Mr. Wheeler said the questions should be asked during the Plan update process although they might not be addressed until the APR process. Chairman de la Fe agreed that it would be best to do both.

Commissioner Hart said he wouldn't have a problem if the South County APR was more welcoming of transportation issues even though it had not been allowed during the North County APR process. But he said it needed to be clear to North County citizens that their input could be addressed during the Transportation Plan update process. He added that he did not think transportation considerations should be taken out of the APR process since it was a citizen driven plan.

Commissioner Lawrence said he agreed with Commissioner Hart and commented that after citizens' suggestions had been evaluated, they should be told how their suggestions would be addressed. Mr. Wolfenstein pointed out that the Transportation Plan Update website said: "All submissions will be carefully reviewed and considered and a report will be prepared to respond to suggestions concerning countywide transportation issues." Commissioner Lawrence then asked how the citizen who made the suggestion could access the report. Mr. Wolfenstein added that it was envisioned that a report would address all the comments and citizens would be notified when the report was available.

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The third agenda item on the agenda was the "Scope of Services for Tysons Corner Urban Center Transportation and Urban Design Study." Sterling Wheeler, Branch Chief, Planning Division, Department of Planning and Zoning, explained that a consultant had been hired to assist the County with this study. He distributed a handout listing the scope of the services and their anticipated completion dates, a copy of which is in the date file. He said Task 1 was the production of an existing conditions and trends report; Task 2, development and validation of a model; Task 3, a screening of a broad range of future development levels; Task 4, determining an appropriate development level for Tysons Corner; and Task 5, a final report describing the findings of the study. Mr. Wheeler said during the course of the study, findings and conclusions would be presented in community forums with notices sent out to all surrounding owners and homeowners associations. Chairman de la Fe requested that these meetings not be scheduled on Wednesday or Thursday evenings when the Planning Commission met.

Responding to a question from Janyce Hedetniemi, Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC), Braddock District, Mr. Wheeler said all County boards and commissions involved in planning for the future of Tysons Corner would be asked to comment.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.
Frank de la Fe, Chairman

For a verbatim record of this meeting, reference may be made to the audio recording which can be found in the Fairfax County, Virginia Planning Commission Office.

Minutes by: Linda B. Rodeffer

Approved on: June 2, 2005

Linda B. Rodeffer, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission